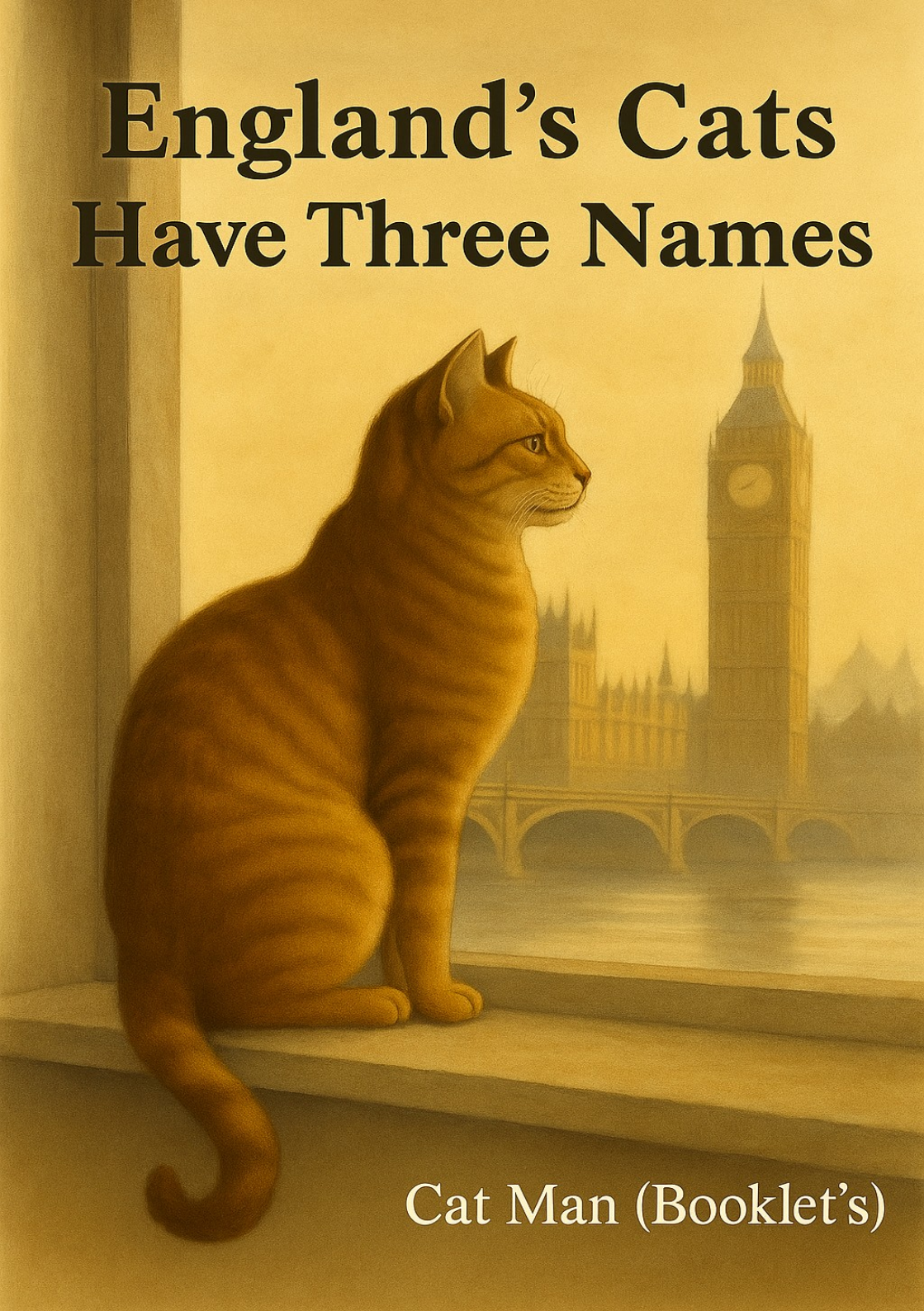
England's Cats Have Three Names



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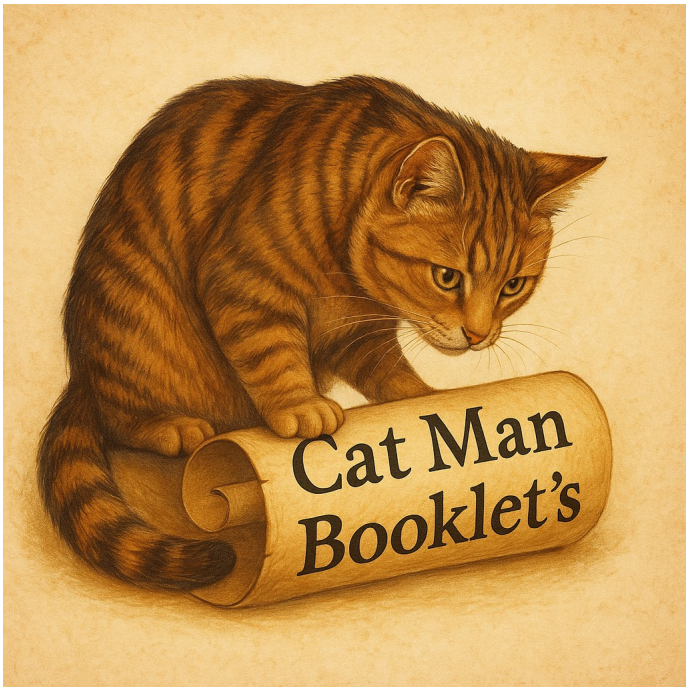

Hrsg: Cat Man (Booklet's)
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England's Cats
Have Three Names

THE NAMING OF CATS

The Naming of Cats is a difficult matter,
It isn't just one of your holiday games;
You may think at first I'm as mad as a hatter
When I tell you, a cat must have THREE DIFFERENT NAMES.
First of all, there's the name that the family use daily,
Such as Peter, Augustus, Alonzo, or James,
Such as Victor or Jonathan, George or Bill Bailey —
All of them sensible everyday names.
There are fancier names if you think they sound sweeter,
Some for the gentlemen, some for the ladies:
Such as Plato, Admetus, Electra, Demeter ——
But all of them sensible everyday names.
But I tell you, a cat needs a name that's particular,
A name that's peculiar, and more dignified,
Otherwise, how can he keep his tail perpendicular,
Or spread out his whiskers, or cherish his pride?
Of names of this kind, I can give you a quorum,
Such as Munkustrap, Quaxo, or Coricopat,
Such as Bombalurina, or else jellylorum —
Names that never belong to more than one cat.
But above and beyond there's still one name left over,
And that is the name that you will never guess;
The name that no human research can discover —
But THE CAT HIMSELF KNOWS, and will never confess.
When you notice a cat in profound meditation,
The reason, I tell you, is always the same:
His mind is engaged in a rapt contemplation
Of the thought, of the thought, of the thought of his name:
His inefl'able effable
Effaninefable
Deep and inscrutable singular Name.

T. S. Eliot

How refined is England's cat culture! In Arabia and in southern European countries, cats are nameless; their attachment to the house is loose, and people do not talk to them. North of the Alps, in France, Germany, and Switzerland, things are different. Cats are given names, at least in most cases.

But because very few cats pay attention to the names they are given, and certainly do not respond promptly when called by name like dogs do, the names are rarely particularly well chosen or melodious. In many homes, the cat is still simply called "Cat" or "Busbus" or perhaps "Tiger." But England's cats, as T. S. Eliot tells us, have three names, and what melodious and mysterious names they are!

It was not until the 18th century that it became customary to give cats individual names. That was the time when, in England—as in France and Italy—cats became the darlings of the educated, of poets and artists, of all those who liked to have a creature around them that knew how to keep them company in a quiet way, that did not suddenly become loud and demanding.

The poet Thomas Gray was one of the first in England to "call a cat by its name." He wrote a poem about one of his friends' cats and named it "Selima":

ON THE DEATH OF THE BELOVED CAT SELIMA,
WHO DROWNED IN A VASE OF GOLD FISH

On the rim of a tall vase,
On which, by the hand of a foreign master,
Flowing with azure flowers,
In her fur, colorfully spotted
Selima lay stretched out
And watched the lake at her feet.

Her tail expressed her joy:
In the lake she saw her round little head,
Her little snout and paws,
Her little dress, which was like tortoiseshell,
Her little black ears, her clear eyes,
And purring with pleasure.

Oh, if only it could glide _ at once
Two genies through the vast waters,
Angelic figures.
Their purple scales
Blaze with an inner fire,
Unfolding a golden glow.

The poor nymph saw it and was enchanted,
And immediately she was enchanted by desire,
Sniffing with her little nose,
Stretching her claw toward the water _
Does gold ever spurn a woman's heart?
Does a cat spurn fish?

Hasty maiden! She stretched,
Her gaze tense, and stretched,
And never saw the abyss!

(The Fates sat nearby, smiling maliciously!)
The edge was slippery—it happened—
She fell headfirst.

Emerging eight times from the waves
She meowed for all the good people,
begging for rescue.
No dolphin and no Triton came!
Susanne heard no sound.
Who will help the favorite!

You beauties, heed this warning:
How quickly a wrong step can happen!
And be bold with caution.
Not everything the heart desires,
is desirable,
All that glitters is not gold.

At that time, there was also a certain Dr. Johnson, whom Boswell tells us about, who gave his cat a name as a sign of recognition of her individuality:

"Hodge." Dr. Johnson loved Hodge dearly and made every effort to nurture her character. He truly treated her as an "individuum ineffabile," telling her every day how beautiful, extraordinary, distinctive, adorable, and unique she was. And when he was very busy one day and forgot to sing Hodge's praises, Hodge took offense, and Dr. Johnson knelt down before Hodge and apologized profusely. Incidentally, when Hodge grew old and lost almost all her teeth, Dr. Johnson fed the animal only oysters...

England's first domestic cats

Since around 800 BC, there have been ancient British myths and legends that mention cats. However, these animals, which lived in the forests and heaths, were wildcats. At the end of the last century, Edward Hamilton was the first to seriously investigate the history of the wildcat in Europe and discovered that until around 1000 AD, almost only wildcats lived in Great Britain. The early medieval peoples made little attempt to tame the wildcats.

On the contrary, the domestic cat came to England as an "immigrant."
Domestic cats interbred with wild cats to some extent, but as more land was cultivated, the wild cats slowly died out.

There is evidence that the first domestic cats came to England with the Romans. At Silchester, the ancient Roman town of Calleva, which was destroyed by the Saxons in 493, a large number of cat skulls and bones were found during excavations.
One might assume that these are the remains of wild cats, which were a popular hunting target at the time.

However, another excavation clearly proves that these cats were domestic cats: in 1949, an ancient Roman villa was discovered near Lullingstone in Kent, which had been destroyed by fire in the 4th century. A falling beam had killed a cat, which must not only have been a hunting trophy in the house, but had obviously lived there.

It is also possible that Cypriot merchants, who knew the cat from Egypt, brought domestic cats to England even before Roman times. In this context, it is interesting to note that in Norfolk and Suffolk, brown and black striped cats are still called "Cyprus cats" today. It is quite possible

Dr. Samuel und Hodge

that the sailors of that time had cats on their ships to combat rodents, and that occasionally one of the cats went its own way in an English port, remained untraceable, and became native to its new environment, or that one of the cats was exchanged for valuable goods.

After the Romans left, there were already quite a few cats in England. They were valued, multiplied, and gradually spread throughout the British Isles. In 936, we find the first documented mention of a cat. In the middle of the 10th century, the laws for the protection of domestic animals by Howel Dda or "Howel the Good," who died in South Wales in 948, mention cats with great respect. The legal code lists "teithi," or good qualities of cats, as follows:

"sight, hearing, killing mice, sharp claws." Perfect cats, which were very expensive and had to be carefully guarded, had "clear eyes, keen hearing, impeccable teeth, a straight tail, razor-sharp claws" and were "without fire marks," i.e., their fur was not singed anywhere; these cats always know how to keep the right distance from the fire and skillfully avoid any flying sparks. This code set the value of a kitten at birth at one penny. If it of the above points, its value was reduced to 1/3 penny.

As soon as the cat caught its first mouse, the usual market value was two pennies. An experienced, good mouse catcher could be traded for four pennies. Of course, it is difficult to compare the monetary value of that time with today's value, but four pennies back then would be equivalent to about one pound today. Even back then, a whole pound—a considerable sum—was the value of the very best cats in England, truly royal cats: these most expensive cats were chosen to guard the king's grain.

Later, the value of cats may have increased even further. A more recent law equates the value of a cat with that of a calf or a working foal. In England, there was also a law

that had been handed down from Arabia and Switzerland: "Whoever kills a cat must pay a grain fine.

The dead cat must be hung by its tail so that its head just touches the ground. Then grain must be poured over it until the cat disappears completely in the pile of grain. If the sinner is unable to pay the corresponding amount of grain, he must provide an unshorn sheep and its lamb.

As everywhere where cats were rare, cats fetched very good prices in England around the year 1000. The sums may seem far-fetched, but at that time there were no mouse and rat traps. And every farmer knew that ten rats consume as much as a man!

The disappearance of wild cats

For a long time, probably throughout the Middle Ages, the number of wildcats in Britain probably exceeded that of domestic cats. We can see how common wildcats still were during the reign of King Edward III from the fact that hunting decrees of that time declared wildcats to be generally huntable animals. This means that not only members of court society, but anyone at all was allowed to hunt wildcats. Accordingly, these animals were certainly not particularly rare. Edward III also decreed that members of the lower classes were only allowed to wear the furs of sheep, rabbits, and wildcats—of "common" animals.

In fact, cat skins were highly sought after at that time. The hunting of wildcats was carried out very intensively. The wildcats retreated to increasingly remote mountain areas. By the 19th century, only a few wildcats remained in the northernmost part of Scotland. But even these fell victim to the commercial zeal of fur traders. When there were no more wildcats in southern England, domestic cats also had to give their lives for their fur.

Bart Angelicus wrote in the 12th century: "A cat with beautiful fur would do well to avoid fur traders and tanners. If a member of these professions discovers a healthy cat with a soft, shiny coat, he kills it on the spot and skins it."

The legend of Percival Cresacre, a Knight Templar who lived in Barnburgh, Yorkshire, in the 15th century, tells us how proud, strong, and brave England's wildcats were. In Barnburgh Church, above the tomb of this Templar, there is still a wooden portrait showing him fighting a wildcat. The knight was once on his way home late at night when he encountered a wildcat in front of the church gate. However, the cat made no attempt to flee, but attacked the knight with all its might. It jumped on the horse, which shied and threw the knight to the ground. A fierce, bloody fight ensued.

Again and again, the knight struck at the cat with his lance; he hit it, but never fatally. It was able to jump at the knight again and again. The cat scratched the knight's armor so fiercely that it began to glow, and it dodged the lance thrusts so skillfully that the lance repeatedly plunged into the ground and finally broke. Sweat poured from Percival Cresacre onto the ground.
With his last ounce of strength, he drew his sword and pierced the cat.

But he himself was so badly wounded that he died that same night in the same place. In the morning, the priests found the two dead bodies in the blood-red courtyard of the church.
"The cat kills the man—the man kills the cat" has been a saying in Yorkshire ever since.

Cats in England in the Middle Ages

Throughout Europe, the Middle Ages were a terrible time for cats. Cats led a hard life. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of human kindness towards cats in England: Henry VIII's chancellor is said to have always had a cat on the arm of his chair when he gave audiences; and Edward Topsell reports in his famous book "History of Four-Footed Animals," published in 1607, about a certain Goelius who used to say: "As soon as I am free from work and business, I love to watch my cats play.
I am not ashamed to play with my cats myself, to talk to them and stroke them.

That is true leisure for a man." However, this Mr. Goelius was probably an exception. The basic attitude of people in the Middle Ages towards cats was one of caution and hostility. Topsell himself concludes his account of Goelius' love of cats with the warning: "Although this animal is treated by many as a member of the family, some have paid dearly for this love. They lost their health, sometimes even their lives; for truly, the more they love such an animal, the less mercy they have toward humans. Friendship with cats is poorly rewarded."

The superstition that anyone who associates with cats will become ill persisted until the 19th century. Conversely, however, cats are also said to have healing powers. Topsell reports that dried and crushed cat liver is a remedy for all kinds of stones in the body, and that cat fat is good for gout. Furthermore, when heated, cat meat, when applied to the appropriate areas, is said to relieve back pain and hemorrhoids. Ben Jomon, the Elizabethan playwright, recommends cat brains as a love ointment, which, when rubbed into the appropriate areas, is said to be very effective! The ointment is said to be particularly effective when it comes from a black cat.

And the best remedy for "spots" is a cat's ear; otherwise, three drops of blood from a cat's tail will do the same job. We find a late aftereffect of medieval medicine in James Woodforde's "Diary of a Country Parson," written in the 18th century. The author recounts that he once had a tumor on his eye, and since he had heard that the tail of a black cat would help, he tried it with his own cat. To his surprise, the swelling and pain had subsided by evening. "Admittedly," James Woodforde added, "the tail of another cat would probably have helped too. But the swelling was terrible, I was in unspeakable pain, and the case was urgent. So I didn't have time to find another cat; my own good Tom had to do the job for me."

In Cornwall, medieval healing practices of this kind are still common in remote areas today: touching a wart nine times with a cat's tail will make it disappear. Three drops of blood from a cat's tail will protect against epilepsy and falling sickness.

And if you want to see well into old age, all you have to do is burn a cat's head and have the ashes blown into your eyes three times. Furthermore, if you have an infection in a fingernail, it is recommended that you stick your finger into a cat's ear for a quarter of an hour: and the infection will be gone!

In the Middle Ages, however, cats did not only have to give their lives for dubious healing arts. They were also often victims of religious persecution. Cats were regarded as witches or relatives of the devil. It is said that during the coronation celebrations for Elizabeth I, a large basket filled with cats and bearing the image of the Pope on the outside was carried through the streets. This basket was publicly burned, and the cries of the cats were interpreted as those of the devil in the Pope's body.

But even during the reign of Elizabeth's Catholic predecessor, a cat was tortured in a similar manner, this

time as an animal that was said to have had secret ties to the Puritans. The poor cat was publicly hanged and then ceremoniously presented to the Bishop of London as a sign of the Catholics' victory over the "devilish" Puritans.

The supposed witchcraft of cats—their reticence, secretiveness, and inscrutability, their ability to enter a house unnoticed through any opening and leave it just as unnoticed—may have given rise to many other strange practices. In England, for example, the arrival of spring was "celebrated" with the killing of a cat. This was because cats were widely believed to be responsible for the weather.

In Great Britain, it was believed that all storms were led by witches or warlocks who rode ahead of the winds in the form of cats. Even today, there are still strange expressions in English sailors' language that allude to cats. "A cats paw of wind" is the measure of wind strength; "cat-rig" is how you prepare for stormy seas, and "watching a cat jump" means being alert to an approaching storm.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, when witch hunts reached their peak, accusations of abuse of cats to cause storms were commonplace. The justification for the death sentence of a witch once stated:

"The witch took the cat to church. She baptized it and then tied several bones from a dead person around it. She had stolen the bones from the cemetery. The witch then swung herself onto her broomstick, took the cat in her arms, and flew far out to sea. There she released the cat, which, in order not to fall into the water, unleashed a terrible storm wind that was supposed to carry her back to land. The storm threatened the city of Leith. A ship carrying jewels and gifts for the Queen of Scotland ran aground on a reef, sprang a leak, and sank.

Later, the same storm hampered the voyage of the ship that was to bring the King of Denmark to England for a visit.

Had His Majesty's faith not prevailed over the tempest, the ship would never have reached land. Such was the devastating effect of a witch cat unleashed at sea! Because two crowned heads were involved, this particular case was made public throughout Great Britain.

There was hardly a witch trial—the last ones in Scotland took place in the 18th century—in which cats did not play an important role. As a result, wherever a cat appeared, no matter how normal it behaved, it always had to fear the worst. A court record states:

Judge: What did you see?
Witness: I saw a cat. It was trying to jump on the door handle to open the door.
Judge: What did you do?
Witness: I killed the cat immediately.
Judge: You did the right thing!

It was not advisable to keep a cat. A woman was once hanged as a witch because her cat had jumped through an open window into her neighbor's house. The neighbor then took the woman to court, claiming that she had sent the devil into her house in the form of the cat and brought ruin upon her entire family.

According to anthropologist Margaret Murray, who researched the history of witchcraft in Britain, witch cats were always brown and black striped cats, never black. In fact, brown and black cats are hardly found anywhere in Great Britain today. They were exterminated in the Middle Ages. Black cats had a better chance of survival:

they were considered indispensable for medicine and were therefore sometimes even bred intentionally.

Although they ultimately had to pay with their lives for the strange healing practices, they were never allowed to die out, and so the species was preserved. One of the most horrific of these practices was called "Taigheirm." It consisted of an elaborate ritual lasting several days, during which several cats were burned, their ashes scattered to the winds, eaten by the practitioner, and rubbed into their eyes. The purpose was to give the practitioner a second sight. On Mull Island, the day on which the last "Taigheirm" took place in the mid-17th century is still celebrated every year.

The fact that it was not only the uneducated who adhered to such superstitions is proven by a dispute that took place in the early 17th century among lecturers at Magdalen College in Oxford. Stokesly, who later became Bishop of London, was accused of baptizing a cat and thus making a pact with the devil.

With the cat's help, he then succeeded in discovering a hidden treasure.

The belief in black magic and that cats play an important role in it still smolders in England today. Whenever magical rites are held somewhere, cats are always present. In a suburb of Brighton, an orgy of devil worshippers is said to have taken place recently, during which a two-year-old child was slaughtered. The participants arrived in limousines, the men wearing masks over their faces, the women wearing red shoes on their feet. Above the altar where the gruesome ritual took place hung a bloody cat's paw, and meter-high black cat statues are said to have adorned the room...

Hexenprotesse - Katzen vor Gericht

T. S. Eliot, from whose "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats" we have already taken the opening poem, also recalls the magical power of certain cats, for example in the poem about the cat named "Magical Mr. Mistoffelees," or in the following poem, which is too beautiful not to include here:

MACAVITY: THE MYSTERY CAT

Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden Paw -
For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law.
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair:
For when they reach the scene of crime - Macavity's not there!

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of gravity.
His powers of levitation would make a fakir stare,
And when you reach the scene of crime - Macavity's not there!
You may seek him in the basement, you may look up in the air—
But I tell you once and once again, Macavity's not there!

Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin;
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are sunken in.
His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head his highly domed;
His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are uncombed.
He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake;
And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide awake.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of depravity.
You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him in the square _
But when a crime's discovered, then Macavity's not there!

He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's.
And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is rifled,
Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been stifled,
Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past repair -
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! Macavity's not there!

And when the Foreign Office finds a Treaty's gone astray,
Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,
There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair -
But it's useless to investigate - Macavity's not there!
And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:
' It must have been Macavity! ' - but he's a mile away.
You'll be sure to find him resting, or licking his thumbs,
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity.
He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare:
At whatever time the deed took place - MACAVITY WASN'T THERE!
And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds are widely known

(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention Griddlebone)
Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all the time
Just controls their operations: the Napoleon of Crime!

Cats as good spirits

After all, even in the Middle Ages we encounter cats that were welcome, regarded as lucky charms and good spirits.
The Irish saint St. Patrick, for example, is said to have been accompanied by a cat when he drove the snakes out of Ireland, and most Irish missionaries and scholars took cats with them on their travels. Many of these preaching cats are depicted in the Book of Kells, the great Irish codex of the Middle Ages.

In general, the church and clergy were surprisingly friendly towards cats, considering that popular belief identified cats with devils and witches. Almost every Anglican church has had a church cat since early times, whose duty is to catch mice, and who is well cared for by the priests and churchgoers in return. Winnie, the cat of St. Paul's Cathedral, liked to stay in the crypt near the graves of , and that is where she was buried. The famous church cat of St. Mary Redcliffe often slept in the pulpit and is said to have even dared to purr comfortably at the preacher's feet during the sermon from time to time. She was buried in the cemetery and received a small gravestone with the inscription: "The Church Cat 1912-1927."

To ensure that the church cat has access to the church at all times of the day and night, most church portals have a small opening at the bottom, about 20 cm wide, as a passageway. At the gate under the North Transept Bell of Exeter Cathedral, which was built in the 15th century, this

opening is said to have been added in 1610 at the express request of the Bishop of Exeter, because mice had severely gnawed the leather bellows of the organ.

Such church cats often had the honor of not only receiving a beautiful grave at "their" church, but even being carved in stone. Such cat sculptures can be found in the vestibule of Northleach Church, Gloucestershire, and in York Chapter House; and in the churches of Hodmet in Shropshire and Kirkburn in Yorkshire, there are even cat statues on the baptismal fonts. In Winchester Cathedral, there is a cat carved in stone holding a mouse in its claws. In Malvern Priory, on the other hand, there is a depiction of a group of mice hanging a cat, taking revenge for all the suffering the cat had caused them.

One of the most famous stories of a cat bringing good luck is that of Dick Whittington and his cat. Reverend Samuel Lysons M.A. tells it under the title: "The Merchant of the Middle Ages, as exemplified by the story of Whittington and his cat. An attempt to remove this interesting story from the realm of fables and assign it its proper place in the history of this country."

The story goes as follows:
When he was a young man, Dick Whittington heard about the splendor of London. It was easy and quick to make your fortune in London! London's streets were paved with gold!
So Dick set off to seek his fortune in London. But how disappointed he was when he saw that London's streets were paved like any other streets! Nevertheless, he took up an apprenticeship and hoped for the future. To pass the time, he bought a cat for a penny. One day, however, a colleague played a joke on him: he stole the cat and gave it to the captain of a ship that traded with the barbarians, although Dick Whittington's friend still proved himself to be a friend by telling the captain who the rightful owner of the cat was.

The ship sailed the seas for weeks and finally landed deep in the south on an unknown coast. The inhabitants of the area were friendly. They took the captain to their king, who invited the foreign gentleman to dinner. The meal was served by many servants, but it was completely spoiled by rats. The king was very angry very angry about this and apologized to the captain.

He said it was a terrible and embarrassing plague and that he did not know how to get rid of the infestation. The captain promised to remedy the situation, and the next day he brought Dick's cat to the palace. In no time at all, the cat restored order, killing many of the rats and driving the rest away.

The king then held a second banquet, which now tasted perfect, and presented the captain with a chest full of jewels as a token of his gratitude. The captain brought this chest back to London and, honorable as he was (after deducting his expenses, of course), handed it over to the rightful owner of the cat. The large sum of money allowed Dick Whittington to start his own business. He became a wealthy merchant, married the daughter of his former master, and later became mayor of London three times.

Of course, it is questionable how much of this story is myth and how much is truth. What is certain is that a Richard Whittington lived from 1350 to 1423 and was Lord Mayor of London three times. There is a portrait of him wearing the mayor's robes and holding a small, playful kitten in his right hand. However, art historians have discovered that the kitten was painted in 125 years after the portrait was completed; originally, there was a skull in its place.

At that time, it was customary to place a skull in the hands of famous people portrayed in order to remind viewers of the transience of all earthly things when looking at such powerful and magnificent figures: This person will also be overtaken by death! It could be that the kitten was then painted in order to bring the legend of Dick Whittington and his fabulous wealth into line with Richard Whittington.

Another explanation says that Dick Whittington became rich through "achat." The French word "achat" means "buying and selling." In English pronunciation, this became "a cat," and imaginative people could have built this beautiful story from there.

However, it is certainly also true that as early as the Middle Ages, cats were sold at fabulous prices to countries where rats were causing terrible damage and eating the population into poverty. Lysons mentions a cat that was sold to the West Indies for 6,000 gold pieces in the 16th century.

In 1857, an entire shipload of cats was exported from England to New Zealand, where rats had devastated entire regions and made them uninhabitable. The campaign was a complete success in a short time!

Cats were also believed to bring good luck when they were walled into the foundations of buildings in England as sacrificial offerings. The skeletons of cats were found in many old houses destroyed by bombs during the last war, and a cat mummy was even found during the renovation of the Tower of London in 1950. The walled-in cat was supposed to protect the house from pests and generally ensure that good fortune prevailed over the building. Many of these cats were preserved with chemicals or smoke and then placed in a position that corresponded as closely as possible to the desired magical effect.

In Hay Hall, for example, which was built in the 14th century, a cat's body was found in a niche, carefully positioned with its teeth bared and claws extended. In a 16th-century building in Southwark, a cat was found holding a rat in its paws and carrying another in its mouth.
In countless other cases, especially in rural areas, cat skeletons or mummies were discovered during the demolition of houses, which had been walled in together with slain rats.

A case from Gibraltar shows how long this custom of cat sacrifice persisted: a young couple who had a house built there one day missed their cat. The bricklayers freely admitted that they had killed the animal, embalmed it, and walled it up; now nothing bad could happen to the young people in the house. As late as 1890, a mason in Cornwall refused to continue his work unless he was allowed to offer a cat as a building sacrifice.

Characteristics of the English cat

It is possible that cats were already a symbol of freedom and independence in England during Roman times. Cats appeared occasionally on banners and company signs from early on.

The cat played a particularly important role as a heraldic animal in the so-called "Clan Chattan," which lived in the Caithness area of Scotland. The clan's coat of arms was a huge mountain cat, and the clan leader bore the proud title "Mohr ar Chat" or "Big Cat." However, it was probably not only the clan's love of freedom that led to this honor being bestowed upon the cat.

The first settlers in that area and ancestors of the "Clan Chattan" belonged to the Teutonic tribe of the "Catti," from which the name of the area "Cattiness" or "Caithness" derives. The allusion to the cat was therefore already present in the clan's oldest name. However, self-confident members of proud Scottish families elsewhere also called themselves "Cats," for example the Macintosh family and the Grant family in Ballindalloch. The motto of these free men was: "Touch not a cat but (without) a glove!" It was considered very dangerous to come into contact with these people without heavy armament and appropriate training.

Even the city of London adopted the cat as a symbol of its freedom: at Newgate, one of the great gates of London, which was severely damaged by the fire of 1666, there were four niches containing statuettes. One of them depicted the goddess of freedom with a cat lying at her feet, and the word LIBERTAS was carved into the base.

In many English families whose names contain the syllable "cat," the cat is the heraldic animal, such as the Cattleys, the Cateralls, and the Catesbys.

Almost all heraldic cats are depicted from the front, with strikingly large eyes and ears, which is probably intended to indicate the vigilance of the members of these families.

Lord Snow—C. P. Snow—made particularly sophisticated use of the cat symbol. He was a famous scientist, became a peer for life, and was also Secretary of State in the Labour government of 1964. He designed his coat of arms himself: in the center it shows snow crystals—an allusion to his name—two crossed feathers and a telescope—symbols of Lord Snow's scientific zeal and vision. The heraldic animals are two Siamese cats, the beloved pets of the Snow family.

The cats also allude to the British College of Advanced Technology, abbreviated CAT, which also adopted the motto "I will either find a way or make one." . This phrase can also be applied to the perseverance and tirelessness of Siamese cats in their search for food.

In an even stranger twist, the cat became the heraldic animal of Catwater Castle near Plymouth. This castle was originally called simply "Château." The British began to translate: "Chât" = "cat" and "eau" = "water," which resulted in the name "Catwater." A similar pun resulted in the famous nursery rhyme: "Hay diddle-diddle, the Cat and the Fiddle." In French, the beginning of the verse was still the title and author's name: "Hey diddle-diddle / par Catherine la Fidèle."

In Ireland, cats were considered a symbol of endurance and bravery in battle. "Fighting like Kilkenny cats" means fighting to mutual destruction. Two Irish cats once met in a forest clearing near Kilkenny. They fought fiercely, scratching each other's eyes out, biting each other's teeth out, breaking each other's limbs: they literally wore each other down, leaving only their tails behind on the battlefield.

Dick Whittington

According to the saying "Enough to make a cat laugh," the cat is also a symbol of melancholy. Old English writers often call the cat "melancholic" because it cannot laugh. However, there is one English cat that is famous for its laughter: the Cheshire Cat in "Alice in Wonderland." People even say "laugh like a Cheshire cat," which may go back even further, to the cheese that used to be made in Cheshire, which was shaped like cats and had a smile on its face.

Of course, the cat's lewdness is also a characteristic that is repeatedly alluded to. It is said that the well-known tailless cats that live on the Isle of Man lost their tails due to lewdness. However, this happened in very early times, namely at the time of Noah's Ark: when the rain began, Noah called all the animals to him, and he did not forget the cat. However, the cat did not pay much attention to the command, continued on its way, and only jumped through the door of the ark when the water became dangerous.

At that very moment, the door slammed shut and pinched off the cat's tail. When the ark ran aground on Mount Ararat, the cat was sleeping at the very back of the ark and did not hold on, so it fell into the water. She had little desire to climb Mount Ararat with the other animals and continue to obey Noah's commands. She chose freedom and swam away to the Isle of Man, the island of humans. According to other reports, seafaring merchants brought neglected cats from Japan to the Isle of Man. But why only to the Isle of Man?

Nor is the story very plausible that a Spanish sailing ship from Philip II's Armada was shipwrecked on the south coast of the island, at the so-called "Spanish Head," and that a pair of tailless cats emerged from the wreck. How did the Spanish ship get there? There is no record of tailless cats ever having lived in Spain. The origin of the Isle of Man cat remains a mystery.

In sun-deprived England, cats naturally stand out because of their need for warmth. However, the Prince of Wales once failed to consider cats' hunger for sunshine and lost a hundred pounds as a result: on a hot summer's day, he was strolling through a London street with his friend Lord Dunham. Lord Dunham then proposed a bet: "Will Your Royal Highness bet that by the end of this street you will have seen fewer cats than I, provided we walk on different sides of the street? And you can even choose which side of the street to walk on!"

The prince was surprised by the strange proposal and bet a hundred pounds. When the two reached the end of the street, Lord Dunham had seen thirteen cats, while the Prince of Wales had to admit that he had not seen a single one. "But how is that possible?" asked the prince. "Very simple!" replied Lord Dunham. "You chose what I expected—the more pleasant side of the street, namely the shady one. So I got the sunny side, which cats always prefer!"

Finally, the erotic activity of cats has something to do with the fact that in certain London houses, many of the ladies whose love is for sale have a porcelain cat in the window.

If the cat has its back to the visitor, the establishment is "occupied"; if, on the other hand, it looks at him expectantly, the newcomer is cordially invited to enter.

England's cats in modern times

Although cats were still often treated cruelly in the 17th century and were victims of magical practices, this was the period when cats began their triumphant march into the hearts of the English. The path to success led from the fields to the stables and barns, from there to the living rooms, and ended in the studies and salons. Isaac Newton is said to have been the one who invented the small oval hole in the doors of rooms, common in many English houses, through which cats can come and go unhindered at any time.

As gentle as Newton's cat was, it still felt the need to enter or leave the room from time to time when the great scholar was busy. So it would either rub around its master's legs or scratch at the door outside. Newton then had to interrupt his work and open the door for the cat. To avoid these disturbances, he had the familiar opening built into the door. One day, however, Newton's cat had three kittens. So Newton cut three smaller openings into his door next to the large one, so that each of his cats now had its own private entrance and exit!

A similar story is told by the painter Barett: He had two cats, one large and one small, and installed two openings in the door to his studio, one large and one small. A friend who came to visit once asked, "Wouldn't one opening have been enough?" "You clever fellow," replied the painter with a superior smile, "how would the big cat get through the small hole?" "The small cat could also go through the large hole," said the friend. "Indeed," said Barett in astonishment, "she could. I hadn't thought of that!"

But cats not only came and went in scholars' homes, where crucial discoveries were made, but also in salons frequented by the most seductive women. Creevey recounts the story of Lady Holland's infamous salon: "

In addition to her earlier insults to the city, Lady Holland also placed an immensely large cat in her salon, which never lets visitors out of its sight and demands their total submission."

The beautiful Countess Richmond was particularly fond of her cats. She was known at the court of Charles II as "Belle Stuart" and was constantly surrounded by admirers. However, she treated this crowd of admirers rather coldly. The only creatures who were allowed to receive more than just sparingly calculated caresses from her were her cats. When Countess Richmond died, many of her relatives hoped for a handsome inheritance. However, "Belle Stuart" bequeathed her entire fortune to her cats, which prompted Pope to write a satirical poem: "Die - and endow a college or a cat."
(Die and bequeath your fortune to a school or a cat).

Also famous is the bequest of Lord Chesterfield, who left pensions to all his cats. And a certain Lady de Puis, who died in 1678, went even further. In her will, she not only specified the amount of the pensions to be paid to her cats, but also stipulated: "I make it a condition for all those who are mentioned in this will that they must visit my cats every week. Otherwise, they will forfeit their inheritance rights." However, the heirs took legal action against this provision. The court
ruled that the pensions provided for should indeed benefit the cats, but that it was not fair to require such visits from the other heirs for all time, while the cats' inheritance rights were not subject to any conditions.

Admiral Nelson never missed an opportunity throughout his life to personally care for his ship's cat. This love of cats was even the reason why Nelson's first marriage to a West Indian woman ended in divorce.

His wife resented her husband for, for example, frequently getting up at night when the sea was rough to comfort the frightened animal. Later, shortly before the Battle of Trafalgar, Nelson's fleet was caught in a hurricane off the French coast and the admiral's ship ran aground on a rock. 73 men fell overboard on impact!

Fifty sailors tried to swim the three-quarters of a mile to shore. Nelson remained on board with a few brave souls, even though the ship was in danger of breaking apart at any moment. In the morning, a frigate appeared, which managed to approach the stranded ship despite the storm. Nelson was the last to leave the wreck, but he asked, "Is anyone missing?" "Your Excellency's cat is not here!" an officer calls back. Nelson goes back, crosses the deck to the wheelhouse, fetches the trembling kitten, and only then leaves the ship!

Disraeli was also a cat lover. His cat Mary was always allowed to sleep next to him on a second pillow. Gladstone teased Disraeli about this: "You subjugate countries and half continents, but you can't move Miss Mary from her favorite spot!" Disraeli was annoyed by this remark and tried to chase Mary out of the room the following night. The animal meowed angrily but refused to budge. It did not respond to caresses and chased the valet away with a terrible hiss. "You see," Gladstone said, "your power doesn't even extend to your second pillow!"

As early as the last century, the English postal administration recognized the usefulness of cats. Most post offices in the country kept cats to chase away mice and prevent them from nesting in the mailbags. The issue of these cats' salaries regularly gave rise to humorous inquiries from members of the House of Commons to the Postmaster General. The archives of the General Post Office in London contain a thick dossier of letters on the subject of the remuneration of postal cats.

Here is an example of a reply to a postmaster named Jackson, who kept three cats and demanded an increase in their weekly salary from one to two shillings due to the rising cost of living: "Mr. Jackson: Three cats are allowed on a trial basis. However, they must pass an entrance exam and, in the opinion of the office, should be female. It is important that the cats are not overfed, and therefore we cannot approve more than 1 s. weekly salary for their maintenance. The main part of the cats' income must be mice, and if the number of mice does not decrease within six months, the payment of the salary will be suspended. Would it be possible to compile statistics on the number of mice killed from time to time? ››

(signed by the Postmaster General, Sept. 23, 1868)

Since the mid-19th century, cats have had a firm place in English life. In 1871, the first cat show was held at the famous Crystal Palace in London. Harrison Weir, a remarkable cat painter, had staged it to encourage even ordinary cat owners to provide their animals with the best possible care and nutrition. Weir also established a standard by which the cats were to be judged: each cat on display was given a score. More than fifty breeds of cats were on display, including blind cats from North Java, tailless cats from the Isle of Man, lion cats from Persia, white cats with blue eyes, even a cat with purple fur and one with a kind of buffalo skin.

The most notable curiosity was a mouse-gray domestic cat that weighed 23 pounds! The exhibition was an unprecedented success. 19,301 visitors showed up on the first day alone. From then on, the exhibition was held every year. Similar exhibitions were soon organized in other cities, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Birmingham.

In 1887, the first cat club, the National Cat Club, was founded. At the turn of the century, special clubs were formed for each individual breed, but these then merged with the National Cat Club in 1910. At the same time, breeding experiments began.

Breeders tried to produce new breeds and new colors. Despite the saying "A cat would eat fish, but is loath to wet her feet"

(A cat likes to eat fish, but does not like to get its feet wet), breeders have even succeeded in breeding cats that enjoy playing in the water! The Plymouth Journal once published the following note:

"In one of the fortifications near Plymouth lives a cat that catches fish in a very skillful manner. Fishing has become a habit for her. Every day she dives into the sea, catches fish, and carries them in her mouth to the sailors' guard room, where she eats them with relish. The cat is now seven years old. Water has become an indispensable part of its life, as if it were a Newfoundland dog. It makes its daily walks along the rocky shore and is always ready to dive into the sea to catch its prey."

The English love of cats often seems grotesque to foreigners. "Beware of people who dislike cats" — that's how far the English go.

A German newspaper once published a report on a cat show under the headline "England's secret passion: cats." The newspaper correspondent was amazed at the enthusiasm of the visitors and wrote, among other things: "Mr. Mackenzie led me to a cage with a prize-winning cat and said, 'Would you swap this for a dog? ' The cat yawned and turned its back on us. To my surprise, the president was particularly enthusiastic about this.

'Did you see that?' he exclaimed. 'What a majestic gesture! No flattery, no attempt to curry favor with us! I don't want to deny that I also find dogs quite nice, but if you don't admit that cats are much superior animals, I'll go wild. You can't doubt that! Look at these magnificent specimens!' ~›~ The cats slept, stretched, and groomed themselves, seemingly unconcerned with the people around them. We talked about the great men of literature who were also cat lovers: Baudelaire, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Gottfried Keller, T. S. Eliot. Mind you, all men.

We already quoted one of these poets and cat lovers, T. S. Eliot, at the beginning. To conclude this chapter, let's read one of his wonderful cat poems again, the one in which he tells us how to address a cat:

THE ADDRESSING OF CATS
by T.S. Eliot

You've read of several kinds of Cat,
And my opinion now is that
You should need no interpreter
To understand their character.
You now have learned enough to see
That Cats are much like you and me
And other people whom we find
Possessed of various types of mind.
For some are same and some are mad
And some are good and some are bad
And some are better, some are worse–
But all may be described in verse.
You've seen them both at work and games,
And learnt about their proper names,
Their habits and their habitat:
But how would you address a Cat?

So first, your memory I'll jog,
And say: A CAT IS NOT A DOG.

And you might now and then supply
Some caviare, or Strassburg Pie,
Some potted grouse, or salmon paste–
He's sure to have his personal taste.
(I know a Cat, who makes a habit
Of eating nothing else but rabbit,
And when he's finished, licks his paws
So's not to waste the onion sauce.)
A Cat's entitled to expect
These evidences of respect.
And so in time you reach your aim,
And finally call him by his NAME.

So this is this, and that is that:
And there's how you ADDRESS A CAT.

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Macavity, die Geheimnis-Katze
The Napoleon of Crime

For your notes

For your notes

Cat Man (Booklet's)